

Abstract 587

TITLE: Immigration, Ethnicity and Acculturation in Culturally Anchored HIV Prevention for Asian/Pacific Islander Populations: A Qualitative Study

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BACKGROUND/OBJECTIVES: Little is known about culturally appropriate HIV prevention at a community-based AIDS agency devoted to work with API groups in New York City. The aim was to explore factors in areas of setting, immigration, ethnicity, and acculturation among target groups which may moderate the effectiveness of peer-based prevention for the groups.

METHODS: Using a grounded theory approach, we content analyzed transcripts of 5 focus groups, each made up of 8 to 11 peer educators with 6 or more months of HIV prevention experience. Groups varied in populations targeted (separate groups working with women, men, gay/bisexual/ transgendered men, youth).

RESULTS: Results show a rich set of cross-cutting themes and themes specific to particular populations. Among the cross-cutting themes associated with perceived success in changing HIV risk behaviors were: education and length of U.S. residence of target individuals; demographic match of peer educator with the target group (ethnicity, age); addressing non-HIV/AIDS issues (e.g., immigration) before bringing up HIV/AIDS; greater perceived success through diffusion of preventive behaviors among naturally occurring social networks, rather than street outreach. Themes specific to particular target groups included: use of diffusion of innovation techniques at multiple nested levels of analysis for particular populations (e.g., sex workers and their "managers"); cultural/ethnic variation in relative value of medical authorities vs. peers as sources of influence concerning HIV risk behaviors; differences in receptivity to HIV education and prevention between those from urban vs. rural areas in countries of origin; settings suited to diffusion among certain groups due to characteristics of their social networks (e.g., pharmacies for Chinese immigrant groups; groceries for South Asian immigrant men; gay bars with high proportions of API MSM)

CONCLUSIONS: Focus groups revealed more aspects of immigrant, cultural, and ethnicity-specific experience which may moderate the effectiveness of HIV prevention among API populations than have previously appeared in the literature. These factors may need to be taken into account when designing culturally anchored HIV prevention efforts for API groups.

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